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THE

SPEECHES

OF

LORD NORTH,

ON A

MOTION FOR A REPEAL

OF THE

CORPORATION AND TEST ACTS,

AS DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1787,

AND

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1789.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE Logographic Press;

AND SOLD BY

J. WALTER, No. 169, PICCADILLY; AND W. RICHARDSON,
UNDER THE ROYAL EXCHANGE.

M.DCC.XC.

BRUSSEL MUSEUM

SPEECH, &c.

WEDNESDAY, *March*, 28, 1787.

ON a motion of Mr. *Beaufoy*, for a repeal of the Corporation and Teſt Acts, Lord *North* roſe and ſaid, That although he profeſſed himſelf a ſincere friend to the preſent religious eſtabliſhment, and even allowed that a complete toleration, in the true ſenſe of the words, was proper; yet, that if any actual point remained behind, to render the toleration granted to the Diſſenters ſtill more complete, it ought to be brought forward. Premiſing thus much, he truſted that none who heard him could prove ſo uncandid as to conceive him actuated by a blind and bigotted ſpirit of intolerance, and illiberally inimical to a freedom of opinion upon religious ſubjects. If the preſent motion went no further than for the fair and free exerciſe of the rights of conſcience, he ſhould be the laſt man upon earth to deliver an opinion againſt it; but his

motive for riſing, was to act the part of a good citizen, and not to lay heavy burdens on the conſciences of any individual whatſoever.

He had heard reports that the Diſſenters wiſhed to gain more than civil privileges; but as this ſuggeſtion was contradicted by the two honourable members who ſpoke upon the ſubject, his doubts on that point were done away, and he gave every belief to the aſſertion of thoſe honourable gentlemen. He ſhould have been glad if the Diſſenters had proceeded in a more regular manner, and ſtated the grievances under which they laboured, by petition to the Houſe; yet, he was not inſenſible that great and liberal minds ſhould ſhew a virtuous eagerneſs to relieve unaſked, to anticipate the wiſhes of fellow-ſubjects; and when a natural way to act thus laudably was known, it ought undoubtedly to be always adopted. The doors of that Houſe ſtood open to all petitioners; and if a petition had been delivered, ſtating their grievances, he doubted not but the juſtice of the Houſe would have redreſſed them, if they were really proved ſo troubleſome in their nature. They had, however, choſen to adopt another mode of bringing their caſe before the Houſe; and they ſeemed rather to depend upon the weight and abilities of the honourable mover and ſeconder of the motion, than

than on the juſtice of their cauſe. But he wiſhed, before the Houſe reſolved on a vote, to ſee on what grounds the motion ſtood. It prayed for the repeal of an act which was the great bulwark of the conſtitution, and to which we owed thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings of freedom which we now happily enjoyed. It recommended procedures contrary to the happy experience of a century.—The Diſſenters appeared deſirous of having ſuch and ſuch privileges granted to them, and a line drawn which they were not to exceed; that line (he was glad to ſay) was drawn; and concerning what relates to the worſhip of God in their own way, they have no grievance to ſtate; but their intreaty was to have the reſtriction from being enabled to fill offices taken off. In the year 1778, a finiſhing ſtroke was put to reſtriction; a general toleration was then granted.

If (continued Lord North) there remains any thing which can operate as a burden on any man's conſcience, in the name of Heaven, let it be done away; but let not the admitting of perſons of particular perſuaſions into the offices of the ſtate be confounded with the reſtriction of conſcience. If this Government finds it prudent and neceſſary to confine the admiſſion to public offices to men of particular principles, it has a right to adhere to ſuch reſtriction; it is a privilege belonging

to all ſtates; and all have exerciſed it, all do exerciſe it, and all will continue to exerciſe it. If Diſſenters claim it as their undoubted, their natural right, to be rendered capable of enjoying offices, and that plea be admitted, the argument may run to all men. The vote of a freeholder for a repreſentative to Parliament is confined to thoſe who poſſeſs a freehold of 40s. or upwards: and thoſe not poſſeſſing that qualification, may call it an uſurpation of their right, by preventing them from voting alſo.

We are told that other countries have no Teſt Acts, and that their eſtabliſhed churches are not endangered for the want thereof. France has Proteſtants at the head of her army and her finances; Pruſſia employs Catholics in her ſervice; but it muſt be conſidered that thoſe are arbitrary Governments; that the King alone, in thoſe countries, is to be ſerved; and can, at pleaſure, remove or advance whom he pleaſes. The King of England being a limited monarch, can do no ſuch thing; he is bound by thoſe reſtrictive laws as much as his ſubjects. Holland admits men of all religions into her army, becauſe not having ſubjects enough of her own, ſhe is obliged to have recourſe to foreign troops; but there is no place where they reſtrain their civil officers more to the eſtabliſhed principles

of the country. The ſame may be ſaid of Sweden.

It had been urged, that by the Corporation and Teſt Acts, any man who refuſes to ſubmit thereto, is ſubject to the ſame puniſhment with thoſe who may be convicted of great and heinous crimes; but, that is not the fact: no man, becauſe he does not chooſe to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is ſubjected to any puniſhment whatever. The Act holds out puniſhment to thoſe who fill offices; and they are puniſhed for wilfully flying in the face of an act of the Legiſlature. If the Act went to force every other man to take the Sacrament, or inflict a penalty on him, it would indeed be a grievance, and he would moſt readily concur in having it repealed.

Lord North, next arguing againſt any indignity being offered to the Diſſenters, by not admitting them to offices, unleſs they qualified by the Teſt Act, ſaid: Have not the country reſolved that no King or Queen ſhould ſit on the throne of the Britiſh Empire, who refuſed to comply with the Teſt Act? If the throne was offered to any Prince, who would not comply from motives of conſcience, the refuſal of the throne to him would be offering him no inſult, no indignity.

Gentlemen ſhould not then lightly talk of inſults and ſtigmas thrown on any ſet of men, who do not chooſe to comply with particular forms.—If all were to be admitted on the principles of natural right, there would be an end to all rules and orders; for no rules could be drawn by the Legiſlature but what would be broken through.

The Corporation Act was made at a time when many diſturbances were occaſioned by the Diſſenters, who were principally inſtrumental in all the misfortunes of the preceding times. All who then wiſhed for peace, and for the preſervation of the conſtitution in Church and State, called for the meaſure, which was then, and which he now conſidered, as a wiſe and politic meaſure; it was, and is neceſſary to confine offices in corporations to thoſe who are well-wiſhers to the eſtabliſhed Church.

We are called upon by an honourable Gentleman (Mr. Beaufoy) to proceed as France has done; but he would rather proceed according to the experience of England, who has enjoyed peace and harmony in the Church by thoſe Acts. It has been ſaid, that when the Teſt Act was made, the King himſelf was ſuſpected of being a Catholic, and that the preſumptive heir had openly

openly avowed himſelf a Catholic; that it was not meant to act againſt the Diſſenters, but againſt the Papiſts; but he would ſay that the Parliament who paſſed it knew how far it extended, they knew that it included both. The Corporation Act clearly meant to exclude the ſectaries, and was not meant to extend to the Papiſts; but it did exclude both; and when the Parliament paſſed both theſe Acts, they knew both Papiſts and Diſſenters were included.

Charles the Second, we are told, prevented, by diſhonourable means, the repeal of thoſe Acts; he thought that the repeal was wiſely and patriotically refuſed. It had been the general means of Princes who had particular objects to attain, which they could not do while every ſect remained as it was, to endeavour to confound all ſects; that when the door of innovation was once opened, they might paſs on until their object was attained.—What was the opinion of Parliament at the Revolution? That Parliament was ſharpened by the miſeries which they had experienced, and by the horror of danger; they deliberately went through all the acts, and repealed every one except the Teſt Act, which they conſidered as a mere civil and political regulation; they preſerved it, and they thought it neceſſary for the ſafety of the Church, and

for

for the preſervation of the conſtitution. By that Parliament a juſt line was drawn, to the relief of conſcience on one hand, and for the ſafety of the Church on the other. The Teſt Act was the corner-ſtone of the conſtitution, which ſhould have every preſervation.

King James, when he wiſhed to gain the Prince and Princeſs of Orange to his views, deſired to have their opinion on the propriety of repealing the Teſt and Corporation Acts. The anſwer of the Prince of Orange was, that he conſented to the repeal of the Penal Laws, but was againſt the repeal of the Teſt Act; and he declared it to be the practice of Holland to confine all civil employments to thoſe who profeſſed the principles of the State; but that the army could not be ſo reſtrained, on account of the want of troops. Nothing brought James ſo ſpeedily to the criſis of his fate, as the Teſt Act, which reſtrained him, and rendered it impoſſible for him to fill all offices, civil and military, with thoſe of his own ſect, which he hoped to be enabled to do, by gaining the repeal of the Teſt Act, and then there would have been an end to all liberty. Tyranny would have ſtolen ſilently on, until it had been ſo deeply rooted, as to render all endeavours againſt it vain. He conceived it to be the duty of every member of that Houſe to prevent that

which,

which, in a future period, might ſubject the nation to the ſame dangers which it before experienced.—If the Scots had any hardſhips, if they had any grievances, they would be ready enough to have laid complaints before the Houſe, and there were many gentlemen of that country in the Houſe, who would be ready enough to ſtate thoſe complaints if any exiſted. His Lordſhip then adverted to the union with Scotland, which he looked upon as a moſt ſacred compact, and which ought not to be touched with a raſh hand. He contended that the eſtabliſhed church was on as ſacred a baſis, and thoſe who wiſhed for no innovation on the Union ſhould guard againſt any attack on the Church.

Proceeding next to the arguments of the honourable member with reſpect to the clergy of the church, who were forced to give the Sacrament to all who deſired it, Lord North remarked, that ſo far from its being the wiſh of the clergy of England to obtain a repeal of the Teſt Act, they were all alarmed at the intention of propoſing the repeal, and were determined to reſiſt it with their greateſt ſtrength. Every miniſter, (he continued to obſerve) is bound by his holy office, to refuſe the communion to any unworthy perſon. If he refuſes according to

law,

law, by law he will be juſtified: the fear of an action ſhould not prevent a man from doing his duty; if he is right, where can be the fear of an action? He will gain honour, and the perſon bringing the action will have a conſiderable expence and diſhonour. The clergy are ſituated now in the ſame manner that they were before the Teſt Act; they could then, and they might now, upon proof, refuſe the adminiſtering the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to any unworthy or bad character. The Sacrament is adminiſtered as a Teſt of being well affected to the church. Some Teſt is neceſſary, and muſt be taken. If the Sacrament, in many inſtances, was taken unworthily, he feared that many falſe oaths were taken; and could that operate as a reaſon for the abolition of oaths, which, in many caſes, are abſolutely neceſſary? The Legiſlature is not to be anſwerable for the conſequences of the Sacrament being taken unworthily, or for falſe oaths: and if any other teſt could be deviſed to anſwer the ſame purpoſes, he would willingly adopt it.

If the plea of birth-right is argued, on that ground, Catholics may alſo claim admiſſion. It had been contended that times have changed; that then a Papiſt was on the throne. Yes, thanks to Heaven! they were changed; but might

might they not be changed again? It might be ſaid that there was now no danger of Jacobitiſm: the family was reduced to two brothers, one of whom being in prieſt's orders, could have no legitimate offspring, and the other was very infirm. But there might be danger in breaking down the barrier which had heretofore guarded the conſtitution. They all knew the perilous nature of a cry, "the Church is in danger;" and an incendiary, watching his opportunity, may cauſe as great a tumult, and as much miſchief by that cry, as by the cry of "No Popery." Though we owe much to the Brunſwick line for the bleſſings of liberty we enjoy, much is alſo owing to the Church for its promotion of harmony, by its ſubmiſſion to the government, and its liberal principles—principles which have encouraged the bringing forward the preſent motion. They found no complaint of eccleſiaſtical tyranny, no church perſecution; let us not then confound toleration of religious principles, with civil and military appointments. Univerſal toleration was eſtabliſhed; let them then be upon their guard againſt innovation on the church; the conſtitution was always in danger when the church was deprived of its rights.

SPEECH

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SPEECH OF LORD NORTH,

ON A

MOTION FOR A REPEAL

OF THE

TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS.

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1789.

AS ſoon as the Queſtion had been read from the Chair,

Lord North roſe and ſaid, the Queſtion had ſo long employed the converſation of the people f this country, within doors and without—had been the ſubject of ſo many parliamentary debates, and on which he had troubled the Houſe already, that it certainly required ſome apology from him for troubling the Houſe once more; but could he hear the ſame arguments

again, and ſit ſilent, without being ſuppoſed to acquieſce in thoſe opinions? He felt it neceſſary, therefore, to beg the pardon and the patience of the Houſe while he went through the arguments that day offered, as briefly as poſſible. As he had in the courſe of his life (rather a long life) looked on thoſe laws, ſo reprobated, as a material ſupport, as the main props, and the ſteady bulwark of the fabrick of the Church; and as he had uniformly conſidered every attempt to ſap the foundation of that bulwark, as an attempt deſtructive to the conſtitution of the Church, which he muſt have leave to ſay, was intimately connected with the conſtitution of the country, he could not think, that he ought patiently to hear thoſe laws taxed with perſecution, with violence and injuſtice.

When he profeſſed attachment to the principles on which thoſe laws reſted, he did not mean to throw any reflection on the opinions of thoſe who conſcientiouſly differed from his ſentiments. Let him not, therefore, be thought to treat the Diſſenters as men who deſerved diſlike or puniſhment. He knew their virtue, their morality, their learning. It was true, the Queſtion had been in agitation two years ago. If Gentlemen had been again called upon to renew their application, there could be no blame

blame on their now renewing it. But if it were renewed again and again, he ſhould always hope to repeat his objections. Having ſaid this, he declared he ſhould go, as much as his memory would lead him to the ſubject of the Honourable Gentleman's arguments. He had ſaid, had they deſerved this puniſhment? —Had they committed crimes? No, they had not. But if they poſſeſſed merits ten times more than they did poſſeſs, could they demand a repeal of a political law, tending to preſerve the government of Church and State?

He agreed with the Honourable Gentleman that it was a civil, and not a religious queſtion. The Acts in queſtion were Acts of ſelf-defence for the Church, and not meant as a puniſhment to any deſcription of perſons whatever. The principles on which both ſtood were theſe—Firſt, that it was eſſential to the happineſs of the country, that the Legiſlature ſhould ſupport the Conſtitution of the Church of England; and next, that it was neceſſary for the ſupport of the conſtitution of the Church of England, that no perſon ſhould poſſeſs power under the Church, that ſhould refuſe to give a teſt of his not being ill affected to it. As the eſtabliſhment of the Church of England was neceſſary to the happineſs

of the people, and the ſafety of the Conſtitution, the laws in ſupport of it could not be deemed laws of perſecution, but an act of ſelf-defence, neceſſary to the ſupport of the conſtitution of the Church of England.

The next thing the Honourable Gentleman ſaid was, that the Corporation and Teſt Acts were not for excluding the Diſſenters, but againſt the Roman Catholics. Whoever would read the Corporation Act, would ſee that the Act was otherwiſe. It was made ſoon after thoſe unhappy times, when the various Proteſtant ſectaries had overturned the conſtitution of the Church of England, and the ſame ſpirit continuing, the Corporation Act was forced from the Legiſlature, to check the dangerous ſpirit of the ſectaries, and to exclude them from Corporations, and to prevent them from ever reſuming their former powers again. His Lordſhip adverted to a clauſe n the Act, requiring that every member of a Corporation ſhould diſavow the ſolemn league and covenant. Could it be ſuppoſed that the Roman Catholics would be made to diſavow the ſolemn league and covenant? The Teſt Act was made to guard againſt Popery. But both the Teſt and Corporation Acts, though one was made againſt Papiſts and the other againſt Proteſtants, could they be imagined to be ignorant of the extent

tent of either? Parliament meant that they ſhould go to the excluſion of all ſectaries.

When the Honourable Gentleman came down to the Revolution, every body knew the opinion of King William. There was a letter from the Prince of Orange to Mr. Stuart, in which the Prince ſaid, he agreed to almoſt every thing propoſed in favour of the Diſſenters, but that he objected to the repeal of the Teſt and Corporation Acts; becauſe he thought that people in power ſhould be of the ſame opinion with the eſtabliſhed religion of the country. What was the opinion of King William? Take the language of the King upon the Throne, with the Houſe of Lords and Houſe of Commons in full Parliament aſſembled; a Parliament, containing among its members, ſome of the beſt ſupporters of the Conſtitution, and the wiſeſt men that ever ſat in Parliament. When they confirmed what the King, when Prince of Orange, had agreed to, Proteſtant Diſſenters were exempted from the penalties of the Acts againſt Recuſants, but the Teſt and Corporation Acts were retained; thus only excluding the Proteſtant Diſſenters from that which they could not enjoy, without participating in the power of the church. What was perſecution was exploded, and what was deemed

neceſſary was maintained. Thus the line was drawn between perſecution and neceſſary defence.

The Honourable Gentleman, his Lordſhip believed, had aſſumed, that an excluſion from offices was a deprivation of natural rights, and a degradation of honour. He ſaid it was not. It was in the power of every government to preſcribe the perſons to fill the offices of power, and to make what reſtrictions it thought proper. When it took away any man's natural rights, it exceeded its proper powers. It was ſurely no depriving them of thoſe rights if they are excluded from places of power and truſt by the Legiſlature, with a controul over the whole. It was confounding the conſtitution of the country to contend otherwiſe; and whoever ſuppoſed that they exceeded their right, muſt ſuppoſe that there was ſome part of the executive power not under the controul of the Legiſlature. When the Legiſlature inveſted the King with ſupreme power, it limited ſuch power to be exerciſed on ſuch and ſuch conditions, and applied what checks and controuls it thought proper. In arbitrary Governments the caſe was otherwiſe. Where all the power was lodged in the hands of one man, he might employ A. B. or C. or whom he pleaſed. It was one of the trivial advantages belonging to an abſolute

ſolute government; but it was trivial indeed, compared to the eſſential and important benefits afforded to Britiſh ſubjects under our form of Government. In this free Conſtitution, where the Legiſlature is the governing power, the caſe was otherwiſe; but they ought not to look to the experience of other countries, and other times, when they had the experience of their own country, and their own times. Let him, his Lordſhip ſaid, be ſhewn any thing in the laws, which prevented any men from performing their religious duties in their own way, or that interfered with them in private life. If the Diſſenters were not ſatisfied with the complete Toleration they already enjoyed, but would claim another ſtep, and aſk for the participation of power, then it would become the Legiſlature to pauſe, and examine whether it was fit to alter the ſyſtem that had proved of ſo much advantage to the conſtitution both of Church and State.

The Honourable Gentleman ſuppoſed, that the preſent Act of Parliament ſubjected Miniſters to clamour and proſecution, for refuſing to adminiſter the Sacrament to a perſon known by them to be a notorious ill-liver, becauſe ſuch perſon had been appointed to a place under Government. He gave the ſuppoſition a direct denial. The Rubric, or Canons of the Church,

forbad Miniſters to give the Sacrament to perſons of that deſcription, and they were to do their duty. They acted under the law, and the law would protect them. No perſon could have a place unleſs he gives a Teſt that he is a perſon well affected to the Church. The Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, it was merely a qualification. He denied that; it was a Teſt ſuch as he had deſcribed.

The Honourable Gentleman had objected to the Teſt, conſidering it improper for a Teſt of a religious nature to be uſed for civil offices. To that he anſwered, he was not fond of that Teſt, if a better could be found; but they ought to look for a better before they gave that up. Some Teſt was abſolutely neceſſary. The Honourable Gentleman had done then as he had done before, compared that Teſt with the other, the oath. He was deſired to ſay what Teſt? He would anſwer, a religious one, an oath. But the Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, the Jews, and Turks, and Pagans took oaths: They might do ſo. He did not know a more ſolemn act than an appeal to the Almighty, the Governor of the world, who ſearches all hearts. The Honourable Gentleman ſaid, oaths had been abuſed and too much multiplied. The example of all countries proved oaths neceſſary

for

for the good order of the State. An oath was a religious appeal to the Almighty, neceſſary for promoting civil purpoſes. In the ſame manner, the intention of a ſacramental Teſt, was introducing a religious Teſt for a civil purpoſe.

The Honourable Gentleman ſaid it was not carried into execution. He apprehended it was; but there were inſtances in which perſons had introduced themſelves into Corporations without taking the Teſt, becauſe they relied on the Annual Indemnity Act, which ſaved them. This ſort of mental fraud did not recommend ſuch perſons to the indulgence of the Legiſlature. It was an evaſion and an abuſe of an Act of Parliament, which ſolemnly and ſubſtantially required that the Teſt ſhould be given fairly and truly.

The Honourable Gentleman, his Lordſhip ſaid, addreſſed himſelf, when ſpeaking on the penalties, more to the feelings of the heart than to the reaſon of the underſtanding. The Honourable Gentleman ſaid, the penalties could be conſidered no otherwiſe than as a perſecution: his Lordſhip would agree with the Honourable Gentleman, and reprobate them as abominably perſecuting, if they were penalties for any perſon's acting as a guardian, or an executor, or the

the like; but they were for no ſuch purpoſe: they went only to exclude from offices under Government; and if any man would take upon himſelf an office, without properly qualifying, the penalty falling upon him could not be conſidered as a perſecution, but as a juſt puniſhment for him who would preſume voluntarily to act in defiance of the known laws of the land. The law enacting the penalties, had not, however, been put into execution; no man had been examined and convicted thereon; but if it had been enforced, it could not have been juſtly called perſecution, unleſs it was perſecution for the Legiſlature to maintain its laws.

If the preſent Motion ſhould be agreed to, it would be going into a new ſyſtem. He venerated the preſent ſyſtem as it had ſtood for a century. If the Queſtion ſhould ever be carried, the ancient maxim that the Conſtitution of England was to be ſupported by the Conſtitution of the Church, would be queſtioned, and ſuppoſed to be abandoned by that Houſe. He revered thoſe laws, and admired them as the beſt ſupport of the Conſtitution. The Teſt Act was a wiſe caution to guard againſt Popery—great advantages had reſulted from it; it had already ſaved the country from Popery; it had proved a ſtumbling-block to King James, when almoſt every Mem-

ber had been cloſeted in vain; and it ought to be revered by every Engliſhman, as having preſerved them from Popery and arbitrary power. Both Acts were intended to ſupport the Church. Any attempt to ſap the foundation of which, might prove dangerous, not only to the Church, but to our freedom and our country.

His Lordſhip ſaid, he could not look back into hiſtory, without ſeeing ſomething congenial in the conſtitution of the Church, and the free government of the country. In the time of King James, and previous to his reign, all attacks were firſt made on the Church, and almoſt immediately afterwards on the Conſtitution of the country; when the Church had been attacked, they had been attacked; when they have been ſuppreſſed, the Church had been ſuppreſſed; when the Church flouriſhed, they flouriſhed; and it was evident by hiſtory, t at the cauſ of the Church was the cauſe of the State. The Church of the preſent day had emerged from her errors, and was purged and purified; her conduct was now marked with the moſt tolerant opinions o thoſe who differed with her, and ſhe breathed the pure ſpirit of civil liberty, for the preſervation of which ſhe was as anxious as any other part of our Conſtitution. The Church, dear as ſhe had been to them by their common

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ſufferings and common dangers, ought to be ſtill dearer to them when purged of her errors, and when to her loyalty ſhe has added a zeal for public freedom, and was attached not only to her Sovereign, but to the people.

The Diſſenters having obtained complete toleration, aſked for a participation in offices. He again intreated the Houſe to pauſe. The Diſſenters prayer was not againſt any eccleſiaſtical perſecutions or ſeverities, but had been brought forward in conſequence of the moderation of the Church; let her not then, ſaid his Lordſhip, after having ſurvived the attempts of Popery, ſuffer for her virtues and moderation; let Gentlemen remember that the ſecurity of the Church has been built upon thoſe Acts; let them remember that the Diſſenters have a free Toleration; let them pauſe then, and paſs not at one ſtep from Toleration to Participation. The Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, there were Baptiſts, and there were Anabaptiſts, who wiſhed well to the intereſts of the Church. No matter who they were; if they changed the ſyſtem in complaiſance to any ſects, they changed the Conſtitution of the Church for ever.

He was a little at a loſs to make out the latter part of the Honourable Gentleman's argument, towards

towards the end of his ſpeech. He had ſaid it was not all the Diſſenters that would be affected by repealing the ſyſtem; it would attach only upon the Preſbyterians, the Independents, and the Baptiſts; the Quakers and Papiſts would derive no benefit. Was that an argument in favour of the liberality of the Honourable Gentleman's plan? Would he relieve ſome Diſſenters, and not all?

The Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, when he aſked one thing, was it reaſonable to conclude that he would neceſſarily aſk another? Moſt certainly, his Lordſhip ſaid, that was a fair way of arguing; but at the ſame time it muſt be allowed that there were principles which ought to be ſacred, and that the true argument here was, would they attempt to alter the ſyſtem, when, if they broke it, they knew not how far they might unſettle it? That was the beſt place to make their ſtand in. If they removed one ſtone of the bulwark, and made the firſt breach, no one could ſay how ſoon the whole would tumble to pieces, and the privileges and conſtitution of the Church be loſt for ever.

He ſaid he had to beg the pardon of the Houſe for having troubled them ſo long; he had given them his ſentiments, which he might not have

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another opportunity of delivering, and which he ſpoke from his heart, without the leaſt particle of a perſecuting ſpirit. He hoped he had given offence to no one; he honoured and reſpected the Diſſenters, and was influenced only in his oppoſition from a conviction, that if the Houſe weakened the Church, they weakened themſelves; and that if they abandoned the wiſe precautions of their anceſtors, they endangered the conſtitution of their country.

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